

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3258
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HOMOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PORT MORESBY 0708

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, MARR, PP, ID
SUBJECT: PAPUA NEW GUINEA FOREIGN POLICY - RELATIONS
WITH INDONESIA

REF; PORT MORESBY 415 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING, WHICH CONTINUES SERIES ON PNG FOREIGN
POLICY, COVERS PNG RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA. PNG IS ONLY
SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTRY WITH LAND BORDER, AND THIS CREATES
PROBLEMS UNIQUE IN SOUTH PACIFIC. WITH TRADE, TRAVEL AND
OTHER TIES BETWEEN THE TWO MINIMAL, INDO-PNG RELATIONS CENTER
ON PROBLEM OF IRIAN JAYA-PNG BORDER AND IRIANESE DISSIDENT
ACTIVITIES WITHIN PNG. WE BELIEVE THAT VIRTUAL IMPOSSIBILITY
OF CONTROLLING BORDER AREA, COMBINED WITH LACK OF COMPREHEN-
SION AND SKILLED DIPLOMACY, WILL CAUSE AN EBB AND FLOW OF
TENSIONS. HOWEVER, WE ALSO BELIEVE BOTH NATIONS VIEW CORRECT
RELATIONS AS BEING IN THEIR INTEREST AND THAT CONFLICT
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IS UNLIKELY. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN OLEWALE TOLD A LONDON AUDIENCE ON MARCH 15,
1978, "IF ONLY BECAUSE OF SHEER SIZE INDONESIA HAS A ROLE
OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN THE REGION. CONSEQUENTLY,
INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDONESIA HAVE A PROFOUND AFFECT
ON ITS NEIGHBORS." EXCEPTING PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S SPECIAL

RELATIONSHIP WITH AUSTRALIA, ITS RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA ARE PROBABLY ITS MOST IMPORTANT. PNG TRADE WITH JAPAN AND THE EEC, FOR EXAMPLE, FAR SURPASSES ITS TRADE WITH INDONESIA, ITS AIRLINE CONNECTIONS WITH INDONESIA ARE LIMITED TO WEEKLY WEWAK-JAYAPURA RUNS, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE IS MINIMAL. HOWEVER, THE INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS OF IRIAN JAYA CONSTITUTE THE LARGEST GROUP OF MELANESIANS OUTSIDE PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AND PAPUA NEW GUINEANS VIEW THE IRIANESE AS MELANESIAN BROTHERS RULED AND PROBABLY OPPRESSED BY THE INDONESIANS. A COMMON BORDER OF SOME 500 MILES BETWEEN PNG AND THE TROUBLED INDONESIAN IRIAN JAYA IS ONE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S PRINCIPAL CONCERNS.

3. LONG-TIME APPREHENSIONS OVER THE BORDER WERE EASED IN 1973 WHEN AUSTRALIA AND INDONESIA CONCLUDED A TREATY AGREEING TO A BOUNDARY OF "PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL PERMANENCE." AN "ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AGREEMENT," ALSO CONCLUDED IN 1973, ESTABLISHED THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR TRADITIONAL PURPOSES AND DEALT WITH NAVIGATION ALONG BOUNDARY RIVERS. MOVEMENT FOR TRADITIONAL PURPOSES HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONTINUING CONSULTATION AND BORDER CROSSING CARDS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO PERMIT THE TRADITIONAL MOVEMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES BACK AND FORTH. CONTROL METHODS ATTEMPTED TO DATE HAVE PROVED VIRTUALLY INEFFECTIVE DUE TO THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF EITHER POLICING A BORDER RANGING FROM ALMOST IMPENETRABLE JUNGLE TO WILD MOUNTAIN TERRAIN

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OR GETTING NATIVES TO UNDERSTAND AND USE ID CARDS.

4. FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE FLY AND SEPIK RIVERS, WHICH FORM PART OF THE BORDER, COULD WELL BECOME NECESSARY, PARTICULARLY IF THE MASSIVE OK TEDI COPPER PROJECT IS LAUNCHED AS THE FLY COULD BE THE MAIN METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE SITE.

5. DESPITE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS PRIOR TO PNG INDEPENDENCE, A MAJOR PROBLEM REMAINS, THAT OF WEST IRIAN DISSIDENT MOVEMENTS. MOST SIGNIFICANT IS ORGANISASI PAPUA MERDEKA (OPM - FREE PAPUA MOVEMENT) HEADED BY JACOB PRAI AND NICHOLAS JOUWE. OPM RECENTLY ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF A CABINET INCLUDING TEN MINISTERS LIVING IN PNG AS EITHER CITIZENS OR PERMISSIVE RESIDENTS. RELIABLE DATA ON OPM STRENGTH ARE UNAVAILABLE. ESTIMATES FROM THE MORE RELIABLE SOURCES VARY FROM 40 TO 50 COMBATANTS AND FROM 700 TO 1,000 PERSONS, INCLUDING WIVES AND CHILDREN, MELANESIAN STYLE. ADDITIONALLY, BGEN SETH RUMKOREM, WHO BROKE WITH THE PRESENT OPM LEADERSHIP IN 1976, IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE TWO TO THREE DOZEN MEN. AS A MILITARY FORCE, OPM IS OF LITTLE MORE THAN NUISANCE VALUE.

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6. SOME 2,000 WEST IRIANESE ARE BELIEVED TO BE LIVING
IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, OF THESE PERHAPS 500 LIVE IN PORT
MORESBY. MOST PROBABLY ARE SYMPATHETIC TO OPM GOALS
ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT BELIEVE MANY TO BE OPM ACTIVISTS.
THE HIGH LEVEL OF PUBLICITY ABOUT IRIANESE DISSIDENT
ACTIVITIES IS PROBABLY DUE IN PART TO THE FACT THAT ONE
IRIANESE IS A REPORTER ON THE ONLY NATIONWIDE DAILY PAPER
IN PNG AND ANOTHER IS IN THE NEWS DEPARTMENT OF NBC.
ALSO, OPM CLAIMS OF SUPPORT ARE EXAGGERATED. UNIDENTIFIED
PNG RESIDENTS AMONG THE TEN NAMED OPM MINISTERS (PARA 5)
DENIED SO MUCH AS PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR NAMING. ALTHOUGH
WE DO NOT KNOW WHO THEY WERE, THEY COULD HAVE INCLUDED
PERSONS SUCH AS DR. PANKATANA, DEAN OF FACULTY OF MEDICINE
OF UPNG AND A LONG-TIME RESIDENT NOT KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN
INVOLVED IN POLITICS. HE AND OTHER PREDOMINANT WEST
IRIANESE CAME HERE AS MEDICAL STUDENTS OR FROM FIJI
AS NEWLY-GRADUATED MDS, IN THE EARLY 60S, MARRIED LOCAL
GIRLS AND HAVE INTEGRATED INTO PNG LIFE AS HAVE MOST OTHER
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IRIANESE HERE.

7. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT SOME PEOPLE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAVE AN ETHNIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE IRIANESE WHICH GIVES RISE TO A NATURAL SYMPATHY, FONMIN OLEWALE RECENTLY SAID THIS SHOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED OR MISUNDERSTOOD. "THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA GOVERNMENT FULLY RESPECTS THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF INDONESIA, JUST AS INDONESIA RESPECTS THAT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA. WHATEVER MIGHT BE THE VIEWS OF INDIVIDUAL PAPUA NEW GUINEANS, THE GRANTING OF ANY DEGREE OF AUTONOMY TO IRIAN JAYA IS ENTIRELY AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR INDONESIA. THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IT REASONABLY CAN TO SEE THAT ITS TERRITORY IS NOT USED FOR OPERATING AGAINST THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT." WE BELIEVE THE GPNG HAS TRIED TO LIVE UP TO THESE STATEMENTS. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS MEET IN DARU ON THE SOUTH COAST AND IN VANIMO ON THE NORTH COAST ONE MONTH AND ON THE INDONESIAN SIDE THE NEXT, ALTERNATING VISITS. POLICE PATROLS TRY TO POLICE THE BORDER AND PNG DEFENCE FORCE SENDS EXTENDED RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS INTO THE BORDER AREA. YET, BGEN RUMKOREM AND OTHER DISSIDENTS HAVE USED, AND PROBABLY CONTINUE TO USE, PNG TERRITORY AS A SANCTUARY FROM WHICH TO CARRY ON ANTI-INDONESIAN ACTIVITIES.

8. STATEMENTS OF GOODWILL AND MUTUAL RESPECT ARE ISSUED FROM TIME TO TIME BUT NOT TO THE EXTREME THAT "THE LW DY DOTH PROTEST TOO MUCH...." SUCH REASSURANCES NOTWITHSTANDING, THE INDONESIANS PRESUMABLY SUSPECT THAT GPNG IS PLAYING A TWO-FACED GAME. MEETINGS BETWEEN TOP PNG OFFICIALS AND DISSIDENT LEADERS HAVE COME TO LIGHT WITH SURPRISING FREQUENCY (MOST RECENTLY IN APRIL), HARD-CORE OPM CADRES WEAR PNG CADET BERETS AND CARRY THREE-COLOR, CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFSET-PROCESSED ID CARDS, OPM PROPAGANDA IS DISTRIBUTED IN PNG, FOREIGN REPORTERS GAIN ACCESS TO REBEL CAMPS INSIDE PNG TERRITORY, AND ETHNIC TIES BETWEEN PAPUA NEW GUINEANS AND WEST IRIANESE ARE CLOSE. MANY PEOPLE IN WEST SEPIK, INCLUDING SOME POLITICAL LEADERS, HAVE RELATIVES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER, AND THERE ARE MARRIAGE TIES ACROSS THE BORDER.

9. PNG IS DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF INDONESIAN INTENTIONS. BGEN DIRO, COMMANDER OF PNG DEFENCE FORCE, TOLD CODEL WOLFF IN JANUARY THAT HE IS CONCERNED ALWAYS ABOUT INDONESIAN ACTIVITY SPILLING OVER THE BORDER. EXPRESSING HIS PERSONAL VIEW, DIRO ADDED, "INDONESIAN HISTORY IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO LOOKING AT THE BORDER SITUATION HERE WITH ANY

DEGREE OF CALM OR SURETY." DURING ACCREDITATION VISIT OF U.S. ARMY ATTACHE WEEK OF APRIL 25, SIMILAR CONCERNS WERE VOICED BY SEVERAL OTHER SENIOR DEFENCE FORCE OFFICERS, THE SECRETARY OF DEFENCE AND AN AUSTRALIAN COLONEL SERVING AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF PNGDF. ALSO OF CONCERN IS PNG'S DEFENSE IF INDONESIA WERE TO VIOLATE PNG TERRITORY. SOME 250 AUSTRALIANS NOW HOLD BOTH LINE AND STAFF POSITIONS IN THE DEFENCE FORCE AND AUSTRALIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS RUNNING SOME \$12 MILLION A YEAR, ACCORDING TO THE ACTING PNGDF COMMANDER, AND \$32 MILLION ACCORDING TO AN AUSTRALIAN OFFICER. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS NO AUSTRALIAN COMMITMENT TO DEFEND PNG IF IT WERE ATTACKED.

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10. CONCERNS AS TO THE INDONESIAN INTENTIONS ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT AS NATIONAL LEADERS RECOGNIZE THAT THEY ARE PLAGUED WITH THE PRESENCE IN THEIR TERRITORY OF A DISSIDENT MOVEMENT WHICH THEY CANNOT COMPLETELY CONTROL, A MOVEMENT AIMED AT A RELATIVELY POWERFUL NEIGHBOR. MOST RECENTLY RELATIONS HEATED UP AS THE RESULT OF BOTH THE NAMING OF PNG CITIZENS AND RESIDENTS TO THE WEST IRIAN REBEL "GOVERNMENT'S" CABINET AND AN AUSTRALIAN PRESS REPORT OF THOUSANDS KILLED IN IRIAN JAYA IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. AS HAS BEEN THE NORM, GPNG REACTED AS IT WOULD EXPECT INDONESIA TO WANT IT TO

ACT. HOWEVER, INDONESIAN EMBASSY, UNDER DIRECTION OF A NEW, INEXPERIENCED AMBASSADOR, PUSHED TOO HARD, INSISTING AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT PNG DEMAND REAFFIRMATION OF LOYALTY FROM ITS CITIZENS. THIS AND OTHER OFFENSIVE REMARKS WERE TOO MUCH FOR EVEN THE NORMALLY COMPLIANT GPNG TO ACCEPT AND FONMIN OLEWALE ANNOUNCED HE HAD CALLED IN THE INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR, PROTESTED RECENT EMBASSY STATEMENTS
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AND SUGGESTED THE TRANSFER OF THE EMBASSY'S INFORMATION OFFICER. (PORT MORESBY 626 AND 633.)

11. BOTH INDONESIAN AMBASSADORS HERE HAVE BEEN GENERALS WHO HAVE NOT DISGUISED THE CONTEMPT THEY FEEL TOWARDS MELANESIANS. THE FIRST INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR ANTAGONIZED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO THE POINT WHERE HE AVOIDED DEALING WITH HIM. WHILE WE CANNOT GAUGE JAKARTA'S REACTIONS OR INTENTIONS FROM PORT MORESBY, WE BELIEVE THE INDONESIAN EMBASSY, IN THE LATEST INCIDENT, WAS OUT IN FRONT OF ITS GOVERNMENT IN ISSUING EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG, ALMOST THREATENING, STATEMENTS TELLING THE GPNG, INTER ALIA, TO STOP REBEL ACTIVITIES IN PNG, NOT TO LEAVE THE MATTER HANGING FOREVER AND NOT TO HAVE DOUBLE LOYALTIES. THE VIEW FROM MORESBY IS THAT EACH NATION SEES CORRECT RELATIONS AS BEING IN ITS INTEREST. INABILITY TO POLICE THE BORDER ADEQUATELY, HOWEVER, COUPLED WITH A DEEP FEELING OF INSECURITY ON THE PNG SIDE, PLUS DIPLOMATIC INADEQUACIES ON BOTH SIDES, WILL PERIODICALLY LEAD TO INCREASED TENSIONS WHICH MAY EBB AS QUICKLY AS THEY FLOW.

12. A KEEN OBSERVER OF PNG, PETER HASTINGS, WROTE A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT, "ANY APPREHENSIONS ENTERTAINED IN JAKARTA IN RESPECT TO THE OPM RELATE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE TO ITS CAPACITY TO ENLIST PNG SYMPATHIES FOR THE IRIANESE AND TO RE-AWAKEN SUBMERGED DREAMS ABOUT A UNITED MELANESIAN NATION, THE ONE-ISLAND STATE." DOMESTIC OPPOSITION TO GPNG'S INDONESIAN POLICY EXISTS AS DOES PUBLIC SYMPATHY FOR THE MELANESIAN WEST IRIANESE. OVER THE LONGER TERM THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF THE IRIAN JAYA ISSUE BECOMING INVOLVED IN DOMESTIC POLITICS, PARTICULARLY IF THERE APPEARS A CHARISMATIC LEADER NOT AS WARY OF INDONESIA AS THE SOMARE GOVERNMENT, WHO SEIZES ON THE ISSUE. ALSO, IF PNG
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PROSPERS, WEST IRIANESE MAY BEGIN TO CROSS THE BORDER IN INCREASING NUMBERS, SEEKING JOBS, BETTER

EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO
LIVE IN A DEMOCRATIC NATION.
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